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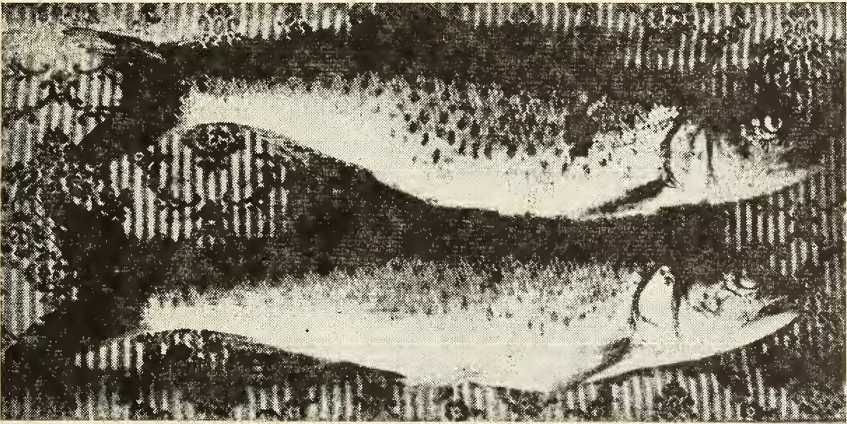
22. INTRODUCTION OF INDIAN TROUT IN LONAVALA WATERS

(With a photograph)

In 1926 Mr. F. V. Evans, a Vice Patron of the Bombay Natural History Society reproduced in the Society's *Journal* (Vol. 31, p. 828) a letter published in 1831-32 in the *Oriental Sporting Magazine*, recording occurrence of a remarkable fish known as Indian trout, in great abundance, near Neemuch in the present Madhya Pradesh where officers of the army stationed at that place enjoyed the enviable treat of catching dozens of Indian trout in a couple of hours on artificial fly in the Chambal and Banas rivers. The letter also quotes a record of "the enormous number of 51 dozen of fine trout" caught in a day's fishing by three anglers. On another occasion 19 dozen per head were landed by two anglers. Being impressed by this attractive record and taking into consideration the altitude of Neemuch and Lonavala, Evans suggested introduction of this excellent game fish into Lonavala waters. Sir Reginald Spence, Hon. Secretary of the Society in 1932 and Mr. Prater, the then Curator, in their booklet *THE GAME FISHES OF BOMBAY PRESIDENCY* (1932) followed Evans in their recommendation of introducing the fish in Lonavala and stated "its introduction into some of the perennial streams of the Deccan would be a great acquisition". However, they regretted that no quotations were forthcoming for the supply of fingerlings of this fish for this purpose.

The recommendation of Evans, Spence and Prater went unattend-

ed for years because of the emphasis placed on the culture of rapidly growing food fishes in India in recent years. However, I had noted with interest the significance of transplantation of this outstanding game fish. Hence, when opportunity arose, efforts were made during the past two years to locate the source of fingerlings and arrange their collection. Fortunately, with the cooperation of Dr. G. P. Dubey, the Director of Fisheries, M.P. and Shri S. N. Chatterjee, Deputy Director, Gandhi Sagar Dam, 150 fingerlings were collected from a stream Gambhirnala, near the town of Jawad, about 30 km from Neemuch in Mandasor Dist. of M.P. The Gambhirnala meets Banas river and the latter joins Chambal near Sawai Madhopur in Rajasthan. (Incidentally, this Banas is different from the Banas which joins Sabarmati in Gujarat). About 115 of these fingerlings were brought to Bombay by train on November 11, 1974 and released into Tata Electric Company's fish farm and 65 grown up individuals released into Walwhan lake at Lonavala as an addition to the existing sport fish fauna of the lake.



A pair of *Raimas bola* Indian trout (juveniles).

The Indian trout, *Raimas bola* formerly, *Barilis bola* (Ham.) though it has no taxonomic relationship with the real trout of the salmon family, is commonly honoured with that suffix, largely because of the close similarity in the shape of body and coloration. Another happy analogue that attracts is its remarkable ability to take fly or fly spoon as avidly as the true trout, thus claiming a reputation as a splendid game fish. It also matches the trout in elegance and agility. To perpetually highlight these fine qualities the anglers preferred to call it the "Indian trout".

Day (1878) reported occurrence of Indian trout in Bengal, Orissa, Assam and N.W. Province and Burma but its distribution in Madhya Pradesh in the tributaries of the Chambal and in the lakes and streams of Rajasthan was not recorded till its mention by Evans (1926). 'Bola'

the specific name of the fish is derived from its Bengali local name; Hindi and Oria equivalents being *Buggarah* and *Buggnah*. In Assam it is called *Korang* or even '*Rajahmas*'. Recent enquiries indicate that fishermen at Jawad and also at Rampura on the Gandhi Sagar reservoir call the fish '*gallar*'. Day (op. cit.) reports capture of this fish in Assam weighing 5 lbs. This weight is on the high side but McDonald (1948) confirms having caught fish up to 3 lbs in Burma. Some of the adult specimens caught in the shallow streams near Jawad on November 9, 1974 measured about 30 cm and weighed 600 gms, though the fisherman of Rampura affirm that the fish attains a weight of 1 kg in the adjoining Gandhi Sagar reservoir constructed in 1962 (265 sq. miles) across the main Chambal river.

The present account places on record introduction of this fish into Lonavala waters of the Peninsular India where it did not occur in the past and fulfills one of the Society's recommendations. Practical significance of this introduction is to make available to the local anglers and tourists a most popular sporting fish. Many eminent anglers had wished to have the real trout into the Deccan waters but were disappointed to know that the real trout lived only in cold water like those in Kashmir and Ootacamund and would not thrive in the warm waters occurring elsewhere. But this '*gallar*' (Indian trout) though it has all the necessary attributes of the real trout, does not suffer from the disability of requiring cold water for thriving healthily. The fish thus fulfills the need of the fly fishing sportsmen. However, since it is a riverine fish it is to be seen whether it would thrive in the lacustrine conditions of lakes.

It has, as will be evident from the illustration, an elegant, streamlined body, tapering at both ends. These features are clearly indicative of fast and active movement and in the field, it was seen actively darting and chasing small live fish. These lightning-like movements may sometimes excel even those of the celebrated Mahseer. Further it has undoubtedly been found to be a piscivorous fish as a number of fish specimens were seen in its stomach which has only a short double coiled gut, typical of a carnivorous habit. In this respect it has to be seen whether it would be a welcome addition into the piscicultural sphere, though no doubt, its propensity would be limited because of its small size. However, in large lakes it would certainly serve as an effective control of weed fish. Being a popular sport fish as well as good eating, its practical value in large lakes is fairly high. These factors have to be weighed carefully before spreading it into other habitats. Nevertheless, in the controlled conditions obtaining in the Walwhan lake, its introduction would be of considerable importance to anglers. It is further observed that the Indian trout which was, at one time, so abundant in the streams near Neemuch is now available only in small numbers,

a well grown three pounder being almost scarce. Inquiries reveal that it is met with very rarely in the commercial catches or in the markets in Bengal or Orissa. Even in the collections specially made in the Rajasthan waters, its occurrence is sporadic. Thus, these preliminary observations tend to point out that this one-time abundant game fish is now considerably reduced in its population largely due to apathy and ignorance about its value as a sporting stock. Serious efforts are, therefore, necessary to locate populations of Indian trout and to collect detailed information about its life history and possibilities of survival before it is too late to avoid its becoming extinct. Fishery Biologists in addition to their concern for food fishes should pay particular attention to this fine game fish.

B/4, SHARDASHRAM,
BHAVANI SHANKAR ROAD,
DADAR, BOMBAY 400 028,
January 7, 1974.

C. V. KULKARNI

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23. SOME INTERESTING METHODS OF FISHING FOR THE GIANT FRESHWATER PRAWN IN KERALA

(With two text-figures)

The giant freshwater prawn (*Macrobrachium rosenbergii*) known locally as *Konchu*, is in high demand and fetches handsome prices. Attracted by the high returns, people have been fishing for the species from every possible location in the backwaters, rivers and channels in central Kerala, adopting various ingenious methods.

Since some of the methods can be adopted with advantage in other parts of the country for catching the same or related species of prawns, a fairly detailed account is given.

Excepting the mode of fishing while the paddy fields are drained for cultivation or that adopted for catching the prawns hiding among submerged mangrove vegetation, in all other cases baits either dropped loose or suspended from floats are invariably used.